delightful good cheer. But Ashirwad, which was adjudged the

Best Film at the National Awards

and also crowned Ashok Kumar the Best Actor of the year, was such a

tear jerker that the thespian's daughter confessed to me she could-

n't ever sit through a second viewing of the father-daughter story.

Just as was the case with Mili.

Satyakam. Aalap. Or Majhli Didi.

But 'Intense' is perhaps a better way

to categorise his movies. For, even

when they were serious unravelling

of relationships, including between

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Saanih Aur Savera, Pyar Ka Sapna,

Anuradha, Abhimaan, Namak Haram - Hrishida used humour to

underscore a serious observation.

That is why he is best remem-

bered as the director who always

made you smile. Yes, his films that

As he did in Jhooti /1977.

राष्ट्रदुत

Food @ India's Railway Stations

railway stations across the country



rain journeys have ly connected with food, taking us through India's dicuisines even as we head towards our destination If you've stocked up on theplas packed in foil, and are planning to make do with the samosas and little cups of tomato soup sold on-board, al low us to take you on a gastro nomic journey. Here are some of the best Indian foods that railway stations across the country have to offer.

Fair warning: reading this article will make vou feel verv hungry, maybe just enough to go ahead and book tickets for your next train journey?

@Guwahati Railway Sta-

What's a trip to Assam without sampling the state's finest tea? Lal Chah gets its name be-

cause of its typical reddishbrown hue. It is a simple Assam black tea, brewed with no milk, and flavoured with liberal helpings of sugar, spices and lemon juice. Lal Chah is easily available at local tea shops at and near Guwahati Railway Station, a must-try beverage for weary passen

Indian street food is synonymous with all manner of chaat. And you don't even have to step out of the railway station for a taste of authentic, Dilli-style chaat. Crispy-fried potatoes mixed in with spices, sweet and sour chutneys, lemon juice, topped with sev and coriander - this is the complete flavour package that will make your journey all the more enjoyable

@Jalandhar City Junction,

Chole Bhature

Deep-fried puris and a spicy chole, what's not to love about

cholebhature? While this clas-

sic North Indian dish is a go-to

breakfast option for many, it

Litti-Chokha

This Bihari classic wheat flour balls spices, accompanied by a preparation of toma toes and brinjals. Littis deliciously process, litti-chokha is

@Patna Junction, Bihar

comprises ghee-soaked stuffed with roasted gram and a variety of are typically baked in a tandoor, giving them a flavour. The dish is a well-balanced, filling meal that can be enioved at any time of the day. Despite its rather involved preparation a popular street food, and where better to try it than in the capital





#STREET-FOOD

Some of the best Indian foods that have to offer!



KadhiKachori **@Aimer Junction,** This tangy Rajasthani Ajmer, available at every street corner and of course, the railway station. The crispy kachoris are served with the city's distinct kadhi. richly flavoured with a range of spices. such as fennel seeds, coriander seeds and

> CholeBhature at Jalandhar City Junction is sure to warm you right up on those cold win-

fenugreek leaves.



Howrah Junction, you can sample this sweet treat for yourself or, in Bengali tradition, gift it to your loved ones. With curdled milk as the base, sandesh is garnished with powdered sugar, cardamom, almonds or tuttifrutti.

@Ratlam Junction, Madhya

Ratlam is more than just "that station from Jab We Met"; the kandapoha served here is a local favourite. Start your day off right with a hot cup of tea and this classic breakfast food that's light, delicious and topped with crunchy sev and

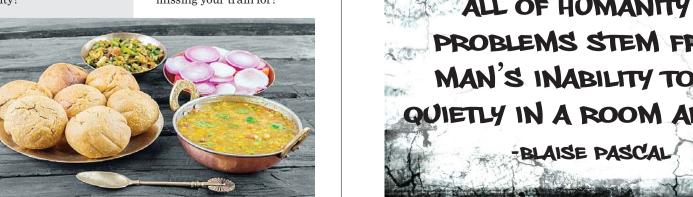
Ven Pongal & Utappam @Guntakal **Andhra Pradesh**

Ven Pongal is a South Indian porridge that is traditionally prepared during the Tamil harvest festival. Softer and fluffier than dosas, utappams are served with vegetable toppings, flying off the tavas just in time to serve hungry passengers. Guntakal, a melting pot of many faiths and cultures, is home to both these de-

Rava Dosa

@Chennai Central, Tamil

Vendors on the platforms of Chennai Central Station, and indeed all across the region serve their ravadosas with a spicy, potato filling, paired with coconut chutney or vegetable kurma. It's hot, fresh and dare we say, it's worth



That was the other side of the Phalke award winner who was also decorated as Padma Vibhushan: even at his idealistic best he seldom moved away from reality. That is why he could fashion a lasting tale like Abhimaan/1973. It probably came out of the divergence of the classical life of Ravi Shankar and Annapurna Devi. Some have traced the roots of this musical to the clash of egos between singer-actors Kishore Kumar and his first wife, Ruma Guha Thakurata. But remember, Hrishida had seen the sitarist and his first wife - daughter of his guru, Baba Alauddin Khan of Maihar - at close guarters, especially when the raga maestro composed for his musical Anuradha (1960). That film which featured the beauty gueen Leela Desai as a vocalist (which she actually was) not only bagged the National Award for the Best Film, it was also nominated for the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival of 1961.

Master of the Middle Path (...2)



Ratnottama

rishida's homage to

his roots in Bengali

cinema expressed

by way of remakes.

His Bawarchi retold

the story of Galpo

Holeo Sattvi (1966)

directed by his NT

Sinha. Biwi Aur

colleague

Makan (1966) recounted the outra-

geously funny tales of the inmates

of Jov Maa Kali Boarding (1955).

The ribtickling Chhadmabeshi

(1971) became Chupke Chupke

(1975), one of the unbeatable bests

Hrishida's kinship-friendship-rela-

tionship oriented, progressive

value based social narratives also

stem from his attachment to litera-

ture. This accounted for his long-

term bonding with literary figures

like Nabendu Ghosh, Rajinder

Singh Bedi, Gulzar. Further,

although he came from the Science

stream he, much like his mentor

Bimal Roy, sourced his storylines

literary works including poems.

directly from, or derived them from

Chandra Chatterjee's immortal tale

of a mother's protective love for an

orphaned child, while Ashirwad

has strong shades of Kashinath

wherein a zamindar strikes a

friendship with an underdog and

Witness Majhli Didi/ 1967: Sarat

comedy on Indian screen.

A Lasting Tale

Pyar Ka Sapna/ 1968, as I have men-Tagore's Sadharan Meye while Gol clinching lines of Sukumar Ray's Gof Churi which reads: Gofer aami. gofer tumi. Gof dive jaay chena... Men are identified by the whiskers they keep. The seeds of Namak Haram/1973 lay in the Hollywood have imagined that the dilemma of Catholic Archbishop in England of Henry II could be reimagined to trace the rise of trade unionism in

Mumbai's then-flourishing textile Zindagi kaisi hai paheli (Anand,

#HRISHIKESH MUKHERJEE

takes up cudgels for him against his own wife. Gaban/ 1966 followed Munshi Premchand's novel about the falling moral values in the middle class that sought to maintain false image in colonial period. Satvakam, as mentioned before, came from Narayan Sanyal's writing. Arjun Pandit/1976 got Bonophul the year's Filmfare award for Best Story, Bemisal/ 1982 recast Ashutosh Mukheriee's Aami Se O Sakha/ 1975 about friendship. love and loyalty. Chaitali / 1975, once again the story of an idealist professor who supports a thief to protect her from becoming a prostitute, was written by Samaresh Bose.

tioned, has its antecedents in Maal/ 1979 germinated from the production, Becket/1964, based on a Jean Anouilh play - but who would a pretender to the robes of a

1971) Salil Chowdhury / Yogesh /

That was the other side of the Phalke award winner who was also decorated as Padma Vibhushan: even at his idealistic best he seldom moved away from reality. That is why he could fashion a lasting tale like Abhimaan/1973. It probably came out of the divergence of the classical life of Ravi Shankar and Annapurna Devi. Some have traced the roots of this musical to the clash of egos between singer-actors Kishore Kumar and his first wife. Ruma Guha Thakurata. But remember, Hrishida had seen the sitarist and his first wife - daughter of his guru, Baba Alauddin Khan of Maihar - at close quarters, especial ly when the raga maestro composed for his musical Anuradha (1960) That film which featured the beauty

> (which she actually was) not only bagged the National Award for the Best Film, it was also nominated for the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival of 1961. Music has remained a stellar fe ture of Hrishikesh Mukherjee films, leading him to come up with films like Abhimaan, Anuradha and Alaap (1977) which he even produced. But even when the produc tion was not a 'musical' films like Anand, Chupke Chupke, Chhaya, Asli Naqli, Anari, Bawarchi Golmaal or Guddi, his films always

embedded nuggets like Zindagi

kaisi hai paheli haav. Itna na

mujhse tu pyar badha, Bhor aayi

queen Leela Desai as a vocalist

Java Bhaduri and Amitabh Bachchan in Abhimaan.



Lily Chakraborty, Jaya, Asrani and Hrishikesh at the shooting of Chupke Chupke

gaya andhiyaara, Golmaal hai bhai sab golmaal hai, and Bol re papihara. As for Ashirwad, it came up with what might be the first rap in Hindi, be it the immortal Rail gaadi chhuk chhuk or the unique Naao chali Nani ki naao chali! Rail gaadi chhuk chhuk chhuk (Ashirwad, 1968) Vasant Desai Harindranath Chattopadhyay Ashok Kumar. The secret lies as much in his

tion of the composer and the song writer most suitable for the theme. The classical Anuradha - I repeat saw Pandit Ravi Shankar create deathless numbers like Kaise din bitey piya jaane na; while the other musical drama, Alaap revolved around a young man's clash with his father when he chooses music over the family's legal profession. For this production he chose Jaidev

Note through all this, the variety

ust as was the case with Mili. Satyakam. Aalap. Or Majhli Didi But 'Intense' is perhaps a better way to categorise his movies. For, even when they were serious unravelling of relationships, including between a nusband and his wife - as were Saanjh Aur Savera, Pyar Ka Sapna, Anuradha, Abhimaan, Namak Haram Hrishida used humour to underscore a serious observation. As he did in Jhooti /1977. That is why he is best remembered as the director who always made you smile.

who went on to bag the Filmfare award for Best Music. In Bawarchi Hrishikesh had the interesting mix of actors like Kali Banerjee, his PTA mate from Kolkata; Usha Kiran from Bombay Talkies, Harindranath Chattopadhyay made amous by Ashirwad, and Patiala gharana singer Nirmala Arun. And who set the film's songs in ragas like Desh? Madan Mohan

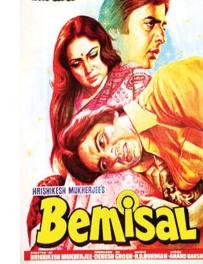
Divergent Memorables

of Chupke Chupke and Mili, while the maestro's son RDB rose to the demands of Bemisal and Naram Garam. Hrishida's friendship with Hemant Kumar resulted in the nuted melody of Kuchh dil ne kaha and the poetic Ya dil ki suno (Anupama) as in the paean to motherhood. Maa hi Ganga. Ma hi Jamuna (Majhli Didi). And his deepest fellowship with Salil Chowdhury? Yes, it had preceded the making of DBZ; stood by in Musafir; continued through Chhaya and Memdidi, to culminate in Anand. As for Vasant Desai, his flu idity with musical genres could compose such divergent memorables as Rail gaadi chhuk chhuk Hum ko man ki shakti dena and Bol

of genres tackled by the director

were never over-the-top entertain-

SD Burman immortalised the songs



love triangle – Amitabh Bachchan, Raakhee and Vinod Mehra.

ers which once comprised the mainveered to the other extreme of burdening his viewers with excessive evocation of the stark realism that dogged the poverty stricken nation post-Partition. Thus, keeping a judicious distance from both, the intellectualism of art films and the mindless mirth of mainstream movies, he earned the sobriquet of the Master of the Middle Path

awards, adulation, friendship, ughter - these filled the life of Hrishikesh Mukherjee as was predicted in 1951 by Saradindu Bandopadhyay, the renowned Bengali litterateur who had - in 1940s, preceded as screenwriter with Bombay Talkies. Yet, sunset boulevard saw him a pain-stricken, despondent man. And, "as he retired in his apartment that overlooked the sunset in the Arabian Sea every night, he was surrounded by a vacuum," Mrinal Sen recounted when Hrishida breathed his last in 2006. "That is why he had mansized mirrors all over his apartment – so that he would feel surrounded by people when he shut the door to the world! Concluded

writetoarbit@rashtradoot.com



The Indian Delegation in Moscow, 1959 (Third from L to R) Nargis, Bimal Roy, Nirupa Roy, Salil Chowdhury, Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Radhu Karmakar (in front).

The Remarkable **Emptiness of Existence**

The space between the planets had to be filled with nothing, otherwise friction would slow the planets down.

n 1654 a German scientist and politician named Otto von Guericke was supposed to be busy being the mayor of Magdeburg. But instead he was putting on a demonstration for lords of the Holy Roman Empire. With his new-fangled invention, a vacuum pump, he sucked the air out of a copper sphere constructed of two hemispheres. He then had two teams of horses, 15 in each, attempt to pull the hemispheres apart. To the astonishment of the royal onlookers, the horses couldn't separate the hemispheres because of the overwhelming pressure of the atmosphere around them. Von Guericke became

obsessed by the idea of a vacuum after learning about the recent and radical idea of a heliocentric universe: a cosmos with the sun at the centre and the planets whipping around it. But for this idea to work, the space between the planets had to filled with nothing.

Otherwise friction would slow

Scientists, philosophers, and

theologians across the globe had

debated the existence of the vac-

uum for millennia, and here was

von Guericke and a bunch of

horses showing that it was real.

But the idea of the vacuum

remained uncomfortable, and

only begrudgingly acknowl-

edged. We might be able to artifi-

cially create a vacuum with

enough cleverness here on

Earth, but nature abhorred the

idea. Scientists produced a com-

promise: The space of space was

filled with a fifth element, an

aether, a substance that did not

have much in the way of mani-

fest properties, but it most defi-

20th century arrived, scientists

never found this aether and continued to turn up empty handed.

through increasingly powerful

telescopes and microscopes, the

more they discovered nothing.

In the 1920s astronomer Edwin

Hubble discovered that the

Andromeda nebula was actually

But as the quantum and cosmological revolutions of the

The more they looked,

nitely wasn't nothing.

Existence of the Vacuum

the planets down.

Empty Places

At subatomic scales, scientists were also discovering atoms to be surprisingly empty places. If vou were to rescale a hydrogen atom so that its nucleus was the size of a basketball, the nearest electron would sit around two miles away. With not so much as a lonely subatomic tumbleweed

Nothing. Absolutely nothing Continued experiments and observations only served to confirm that at scales both large and small, we appeared to live in an empty world.

the Andromeda galaxy, an island

home of billions of stars sitting

a staggering 2.5 million light-

years away. As far as we could

tell, all those lonely light-years

were filled with not much at all.

just the occasional lost hydrogen

Compared to the relatively

small size of galaxies them-

selves (our own Milky Way

stretches across for a mere

100,000 light-years), the universe

seemed dominated by absence.

atom or wandering photon.

And then that nothingness cracked open. Within the emptiness that dominates the volume of an atom and the volume of the universe, physicists found something. Far from the sedate aether of yore, this something is strong enough to be tearing our universe apart. The void, it turns out, is alive

In December 2022, an international team of astronomers released the results of their latest survey of galaxies, and their work has confirmed that the vacuum of space-time is wreaking havoc across the cosmos. They found that matter makes up only a minority contribution to the energy budget of the universe.

er and larger faster and faster every day. The exact present-day expan sion rate is still a matter of some debate among cosmologists, but the reality is clear: Something is making the universe blow up. It

in the vacuum, and that energy

is dominating the future evolu

Their work is the latest in a

string of discoveries stretching

back over two decades. In the

late 1990s, two independent

teams of astronomers discov-

ered that the expansion of the

universe is accelerating, mean-

ing that our universe grows larg-

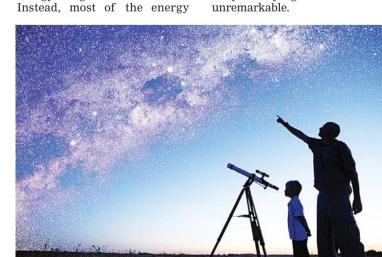
tion of the universe.

appears as a repulsive gravitational force, and we've named it The trick here is that the vacuum, first demonstrated by von Guericke all those centuries ago, is not as empty as it seems. If you were to take a box (or, following von Guericke's example, two hemispheres), and remove everything from it, including all the particles, all the light, all the

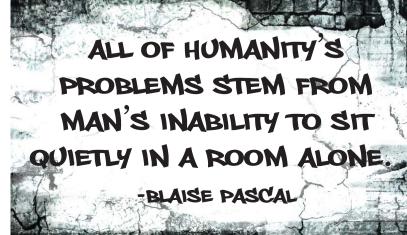
everything, you would not be left with, strictly speaking, nothing. What you'd be left with is the vacuum of space-time itself, which we've learned is an entity in its own right.

We live in a quantum universe a universe where you can never be quite sure about anything. At the tiniest of scales, subatomic particles fizz and pop into existence, briefly experiencing the world of the living before returning back from where they came, disappearing from reality before they have a chance to meaningful ly interact with anything else. All this would be mathemati-

cally annoying but otherwise unremarkable



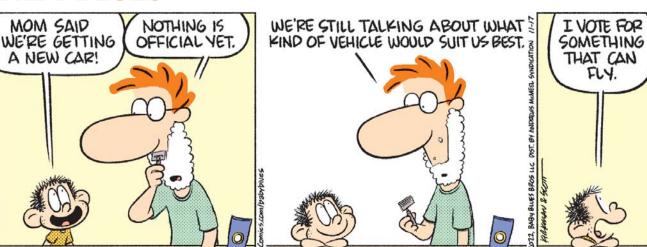
THE WALL



Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Jaya Bhaduri and Ashok Kumar on the sets of Mili

BABY BLUES

Dharmendra, Saira Banu and Hrishikesh Mukherjee at the shooting of Chaitali.



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

I'LL KEEP

IN MIND.



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

